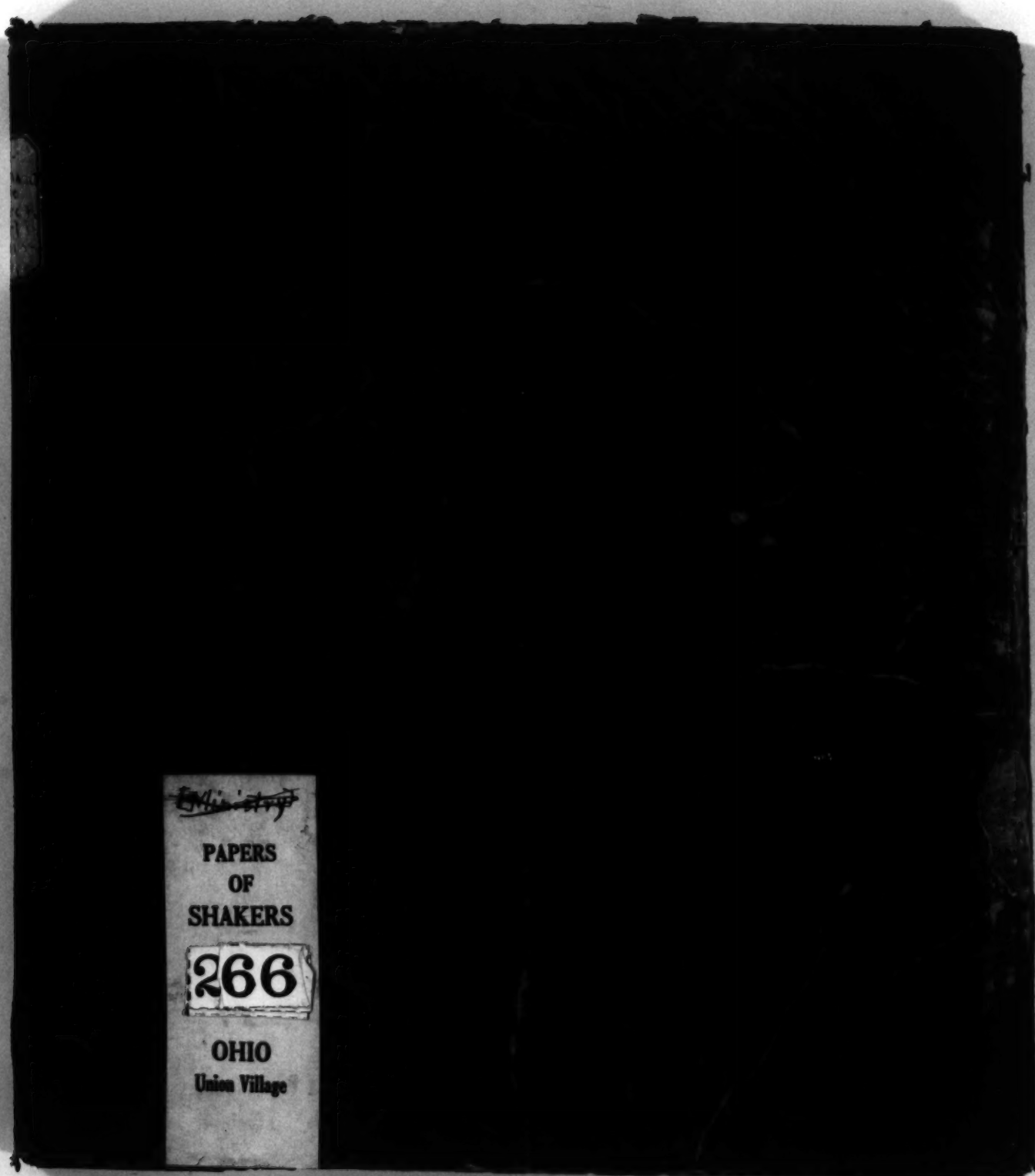
PAPERS
OF
SHAKERS
266
OHIO
Union Village

The COVENANT

or

Constitution

of the

CHURCH

of the

United Society

At

North Union, Ohio.

Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten. Jeremiah.

A brief Illustration of the Principles on which the Covenant of the United Society is founded.

When man by transgression lost his primitive rectitude, he then lost the unity of his true interest, both to God and his fellow creatures. Hence he became selfish & partial in all his views and pursuits. Instead of feeling it his interest and happiness to honor and build up the cause of God, and benefit his fellow creatures, his feelings were turned to exalt and build up himself at the expense of the peace and happiness of his own species, and the loss of his union to his creator.

The object and design of the consecrated interest of the Church, and the Covenant relation of this Institution by which it is maintained, are to regain the unity of that relation to God, and that social order & connexion with each other which mankind lost at the beginning and to place it upon that solid foundation which cannot be overthrown; so that its blessings & effects may be felt and enjoyed by all who are willing to build on that foundation as an ever living Institution.

It is a matter of importance that those who are admitted into this institution, should not be ignorant of the nature of such an undertaking; that they should know for themselves the principles & practice of the institution, and learn by their own experience what are the requirements of the gospel.

In a Church relation, founded upon true Christian principles, one faith must govern all the members. Their interest must also be one, and all their plans and pursuits must be regulated by one head or leading influence, and tend to one general end & purpose, according to that unity of faith manifested in their written Covenant. For, as a body without a head, possesses neither life nor power; so a church without a head or leading power, cannot support its existence, much less maintain the life and power of the gospel.

In the first associations of believers in America, their first object was to locate themselves near together, for the benefit of religious worship and protection. and having determined to submit to the government of Christ, according to his revealed will to them, and to devote themselves to the service of God,

and the mutual benefit of each other, they found it most convenient for their purpose, and most conformable to the example of the primitive christians, to bring their property together, and unite it in one consecrated interest, for the mutual benefit of the Institution. Agreeable to this plan, the idea of a united interest was introduced, and the property was intrusted to managers in whom they had full confidence, and who were considered faithful, trusty & capable. A gospel government in things spiritual and temporal was then established upon its proper foundation.

It is proper to remark here, that the foundation of the real estate of the [Parent] Church was laid, and a large portion of it made up of property which was devoted and consecrated by persons who have since left the world. And it was the special object and desire of those persons, as expressed in their last wills and testaments, that it should forever remain a consecrated interest, devoted to the sacred purposes for which it was given, & which are expressed in the Covenant. Another portion of this united interest has been made up of the consecrated property and labors of those who are still living and faithful in the sacred cause. Hence it is

obvious that the Society can never appropriate this consecrated property to any other use without violating the sacred will, and defeating the pious intentions of the consecrators.

The government of Christ in his Church, is a divine government; and all who justly expect to be benefitted by it, must come within the bounds of its protection, acknowledge its authority, approve and yield obedience to its requirements. For it is a truth confirmed by the experience of all ages, that no government, whether human or divine, can be beneficial to those who will not acknowledge its authority and come under its protection.

Every divine institution emanating from God, who is the God of order, is necessarily formed according to some consistent principles. The Church of Christ must therefore be established upon a foundation which cannot admit of a precarious or uncertain tenure. Divine Providence, for wise purposes, has permitted all earthly governments, in some way or manner, to emanate from the people; but whenever Infinite Wisdom has seen fit to establish a spiritual or religious government, for the benefit of his Covenant people, it has invariably originated from divine appointment; and its continuance has been signally

blessed and protected by an overruling Providence. This is clear from the records of Scripture. God appointed Moses, and established him as a leader of the tribes of Israel; and by divine revelation Moses appointed Joshua to succeed him. Altho' these things were done under the Law, they evidently pointed to a gospel government, which was more clearly manifested under the ministration of Jesus Christ, and confirmed by his words & works. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you — As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." *

Jesus Christ appointed his apostles as the visible head and leaders of the church, and the apostles appointed their successors and "ordained elders in every church." ● And while the government of the church was kept & acknowledged on this foundation, its purity was preserved; but when, through the influence of human wisdom, the rulers of the church came to be elected by vote, then were produced those unhappy divisions, by which the true union of the church was broken, its order destroyed, "and the power of the holy people scattered." But when the second manifestation of the spirit of Christ came forth in the revival

* John XV. 16 & XX. 21. ● Matt. XVI. 18, 19. · John XX. 23. & Acts XIV. 23.

of the true faith and principles of the gospel, for the restoration and establishment of the true nature & order of the church; then the same divine order of spiritual government was again revived.

Hence the ministerial institution must be considered as originating from divine authority: of course, the appointment of the ministry is, in reality, a divine appointment, given through the preceding Ministry, & confirmed and established in the Society by the general union & and approbation of the church; and when duly established, the first visible authority, together with the necessary powers of government, are confided to them: Hence, to their authority, all final appeals must be submitted for decision.

As regulation and good order are the strength and support of every institution; so they are essentially necessary in all the concerns of this Society. Hence arises the necessity of Elders, Deacons & Trustees to conduct the various concerns of the church and Society, which fall under their respective jurisdictions.

It is the province of the Elders to assist in the spiritual administration and government of their respective families or departments. The Deacons are intrusted

with the stewardship of the families to which they belong; their business is to superintend the domestic concerns of their respective departments. The superintending Deacons or acting Trustees are the constitutional repositories of the temporal property which forms the united & consecrated interest of the church, and the official agents for the transaction of temporal business with those without. And as the governing power is vested in the Ministry, and supported by the general union of the Society, it is therefore very important that the Elders, Deacons & Trustees, in all their concerns should maintain a proper union and understanding with the Ministry and with each other.

The present order of the Church was first established at New Lebanon, in the year 1792, under the ministration of Joseph Meacham and Lucy Wright, who were considered as the founders and spiritual leaders of church order in this day of Christ's second appearing. Under their ministration, Ministers & Elders were appointed, to whom were intrusted the more immediate charge and protection of believers in the different Societies. Deacons were also appointed to officiate as acting Trustees of the temporal concerns of the believers, who

were then collecting into families, and gathering into the order of the gospel. In this appointment David Meacham Senr. and Jonathan Walker were the first in temporal trust, and took the charge of superintending & regulating the consecrated interest and property of the church, and by their labors and union its temporal affairs were brought into order.

As a preliminary to the establishment of gospel order in the Church, the members thereof entered into a solemn covenant with each other, to stand as a united community, and keep the way of God in church relation, for the mutual support and protection of each other in their christian travel, both in things spiritual & temporal. In this covenant they freely gave themselves & services, together with all their temporal interest, to the service of God, for the support & benefit of each other, and for such other pious and charitable uses as the gospel might require. As the light of the gospel increas'd in the church, and the necessity of further improvements opened to view, it was found expedient to renew this Covenant, in order to amend its written form.

Tho' we consider the law of Christ planted in

our souls as more valid, and more binding upon us than written laws, creeds or covenants; because, on our obedience to this law depend all our hopes of happiness here & hereafter. Yet, while our temporal property remains under the influence of human laws, written instruments may serve to protect it against all unjust & unlawful claims from those without, and against any infringement from the lawless invaders of our just & equitable rights & privileges. The written covenant, however, is but a transcript of the internal principles and law of Christ which govern and protect this Society.

It is worthy of remark that the first Covenant into which the members of the church unanimously entered, was verbal; yet it was made in good faith; & being considered by them as a sacred contract which was religiously binding upon them, it was conscientiously kept. In the year 1795 it was committed to writing & signed by all the members. In 1801, it was renewed with the addition of some amendments that were found by experience to be essential. In March 1814 it was again renewed, with further amendments, and its written form considerably improved. But in all its amendments and improvements, the original, & main object of

the Covenant has always been kept in view, and the substance of it preserved entire.

It is now more than sixteen years since the last Covenant was executed. During this period the church has passed through many trying scenes, gained much valuable experience, and found a great increase of light and understanding, both in things spiritual & temporal. Hence some further amendments are found necessary to make the written covenant more complete in its provisions, and better calculated in its form for a general covenant, applicable to all the branches of the Society, where gospel order is established; to protect the church & its members in their religious and consecrated rights & privileges, and to give all concerned a more clear and explicit view of its nature and principles.

It is therefore agreed that the Covenant of 1814 be renewed, and its written form revised and improved as in the following articles.

New Lebanon April 30th 1830.

The foregoing "Brief Illustration of the Principles on which the Covenant of the United Society is founded"; including also, a brief account of the gradual introduction of the Church Covenant into the first organized church in the Parent Society at New Lebanon, New York; is considered as containing a full & satisfactory explanation of the true nature, end and design of the Church Covenant. We shall therefore, only premise a few facts relative to the history and organization of the Church or Branch at North Union: — As follows, Viz.

The Branch of the United Society at North Union, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, was organized into Church order in the year 1828, under the ministration of Ashbel Kitchell and Lois Spining; who were duly appointed and sent from the Church at Union Village, (Ohio) by the Ministry* of said Church; to take the immediate care & superintendance of this branch of the Society. — Under their ministration the Church was gathered, and Elders were appointed to assist in the spiritual care and protection of the several families in the Society. — By them also, Return Russell, Elisha Russell and John P. Root were appointed Trustees of the temporal

* Which Ministry is the centre of Influence to all the Branches in the West.

concerns of the Church.

At the above mentioned period of 1828, the church in this place entered into, and executed their first Church Covenant, which has remained, unrevised, until the present date, (1842.)

In the year 1829, (shortly after we had executed our first church Covenant,) a new Edition of the Church Covenant was drawn up at New Lebanon, (N. Y.) better calculated in its form as a general or uniform Covenant applicable to all the branches of the Society. (See "Brief Illustration," page 10.) And as this form has met the universal approbation of Believers, and is now generally adopted by all the Societies - East and West. — Therefore, it is agreed, that in the present renewal of our Church Covenant, that we adopt the said form, as containing all the essential provisions of the former, and as giving a more clear & explicit view of the nature and principles of the Church Covenant.

The undersigned, the Ministry of the United Society at New Lebanon, having duly examined the following Covenant which has been recommended to the Society, and agreed to, and regularly signed & sealed by the members of the Church, do hereby approve and recommend the same, as a general Covenant or Constitution for the Church at New Lebanon & Waterviliet, & also, for the United Society in all its Branches, wherever and whenever they may be prepared to adopt it.

New Lebanon April 30th 1830.

Ebenezer Bishop
Rufus Bishop
Mary A. Landon
Asenath Clark.

Covenant or Constitution.

Preamble.

We, the Brethren and Sisters of the United Society of Believers, (called Shakers,) residing in the County of Cuyahoga and State of Ohio, being connected together as a religious and social community, distinguished by the name and title of The Church of the United Society at North Union; which, for a number of years past, has been established and in successful operation, under the charge and protection of the Ministry and Eldership thereof; — Feeling the importance, not only of renewing and confirming our spiritual Covenant with God and Each other, but also of renewing and improving our social compact, and amending the written form thereof, Do make, ordain & declare the following articles of agreement as a summary of the principles, rules and regulations established in the church of said United Society, which are to be kept and maintained by us, both in our collective and individual capacities, as a Covenant or Constitution,

which shall stand as a lawful testimony of our religious association before all men, and in all cases of question & law, relating to the possession and improvement of our united and consecrated interest, property and estate.

Article II. Of the Gospel Ministry.

Section 1. Their origin, call and institution.

We solemnly declare to each other, and to all whom it may concern, that we have received and do hereby acknowledge as the foundation of our faith, order and government, the testimony or Gospel of Christ, in his first and second appearing; and we do hereby solemnly agree to support and maintain the same as ministered by the founders of this Society, & kept and conveyed through a regular order of ministration down to the present day: and altho, [as a religious body] we are variously associated, with respect to the local situations of our respective communities; yet we are known and distinguished as a peculiar people, & consider and acknowledge ourselves members of one general community, possessing one faith, and subject to the administration of one united and parental government, which has been regularly supported from the first

foundation pillars of the institution, and which continues to operate for the support, protection and strength of every part of the said community.

Section 2. Their order and office.

We further acknowledge & declare, that for the purpose of promoting and maintaining union, order and harmony throughout the various branches of this community, the primary authority of the Institution has been settled in the first established Ministry at New Lebanon; there to rest and remain as the general centre of union to all who stand in gospel relation and communion with this society. The established order of this Ministry includes four persons, two of each sex.

Section 3. Perpetuity of their office, and how supplied.

We further acknowledge and declare, that the aforesaid primary authority has been, and is to be perpetuated as follows, namely; that the first in that office and calling possess the right, by the sanction of Divine authority, given through the first founders of this society, to appoint their successors, and to prescribe or direct any regulation or appointment which they may judge most proper & necessary respecting the Ministry, or any other important

matter which may concern the welfare of the church or Society subsequent to their deceased. But in case, no such appointment or regulation be so prescribed or directed, then the right to direct and authorize such appointments and regulations devolves upon the surviving members of the Ministry, in counsel with the Elders of the Church and others, as the nature of the case in their judgment may require. Such appointments being officially communicated to all concerned, and receiving the general approbation of the Church, are confirmed & supported in the Society.

munities.

Section 4. Of the Ministerial office in the several Societies or com-

We further acknowledge and declare, Covenant and agree, that the Ministerial office and authority in any Society or community of our faith, which has Emanated, or may Emanate, in a regular line of order, from the centre of union aforesaid, is, and shall be acknowledged, owned & respected as the Spiritual and primary authority of such Society or community, in all matters pertaining to the ministerial office: And in case of the decease or removal of any individual of said Ministry, in any such Society, his or her lot and place shall be filled by agreement

of the surviving Ministers, in counsel with the Elders of the church and others, as the nature of the case may require, together with the knowledge and approbation of the primary Ministerial authority at New Lebanon aforesaid, to which they are responsible.

Section 5. Powers and duties of the Ministry.

We further acknowledge & declare, that the Ministry being appointed and established as aforesaid, are vested with the primary authority of the Church and its various branches: hence it becomes their special duty to guide and superintend the spiritual concerns of the Society, as a body of people under their care and government, and in connection with the Elders in their respective families and departments, who shall act in union with them, to give and establish such orders, rules & regulations as may be found necessary for the government and protection of the church & society within the limits of their jurisdiction: and also, to counsel, advise and judge in all matters of importance whether spiritual or temporal. The said Ministry are also invested with authority in connexion with the Elders as aforesaid, to nominate and appoint to office, Ministers, Elders, Deacons & Trustees, & to assign

offices of care & trust to such brethren and sisters as they, the said Ministry and Elders shall judge to be best qualified for the several offices to which they may be appointed. And we hereby covenant and agree, that such nominations and appointments being made and officially communicated to those concerned, and receiving the general approbation of the church, as aforesaid, or of the families concerned, shall thenceforth be confirmed & supported until altered or revoked by the authority aforesaid.

Article III. Institution of the Church.

Section 1. The object and design of Church relation.

We further acknowledge and declare, that the great object, purpose and design of our uniting together as a church or body of people in social and religious compact, is, faithfully & honestly to occupy and improve the various gifts and talents, both of a spiritual and temporal nature, with which divine Wisdom has blessed us, for the service of God, for the honor of the gospel, and for the mutual protection, support, comfort and happiness of each other, as brethren and sisters in the gospel, and for such other pious & charitable purposes as the gospel may require.

Section 2. Who are not admissible into Church relation.

As the unity, purity and stability of the Church essentially depend on the character and qualifications of its members; and as it is a matter of importance that it should not be incumbered with persons not duly qualified for that distinguished relation: Therefore we agree, that no member of any company or association in business or civil concern; no copartner in trade; no person under any legal involvement or obligations of service; no slave nor slave-holder, shall be deemed qualified for admission into the Covenant relation and communion of the Church.

Section 3. Preparation for admission into Church relation.

In order that believers may be prepared for entering into the sacred privilege of church relation, it is of primary importance that sufficient opportunity and privilege should be afforded under the ministry of the gospel for them to acquire suitable instruction in the genuine principles of righteousness, honesty, justice and true holiness; and also, that they should prove their faith & christian morality by their practical obedience to the precepts of the gospel, according to their instructions. It is also indispensably necessary for them to receive the uniting spirit

of Christ, and to become so far of one heart & one mind, that they are willing to sacrifice all other relations for this sacred one. Another essential step is, to settle all just and equitable claims of creditors and filial heirs; so that whatever property they possess, may be justly their own. When this is done, and they feel themselves sufficiently prepared to make a deliberate and final choice to devote themselves, wholly, to the service of God, without reserve, and it shall be deemed proper by the leading authority of the Church, after examination and due consideration, to allow them to associate together in the capacity of a church, or a branch thereof, in gospel order; they may then consecrate themselves, and all they possess, to the service of God forever, and confirm the same by signing and sealing a written Covenant, predicated upon the principles herein contained, and by fulfilling, on their part, all its obligations.

Section 4. Admission of new members.

As the door must be kept open for the admission of new members into the Church, when duly prepared, it is agreed that each and every person who shall, at any time after the date and execution of the Church

Covenant, in any branch of the community, be admitted into the Church, as a member thereof, shall, previously, have a fair opportunity to obtain a full, clear & explicit understanding of the object and design of the Church Covenant, and of the obligations it enjoins on the members.

For this purpose, he or she shall, in the presence of two of the deacons or acting trustees of the Church, read said Covenant, or hear the same distinctly read; so as to be able, freely, to acknowledge his or her full approbation and acceptance thereof, in all its parts. Then he, she or they, as the case may be, shall be at liberty to sign the same, and having signed and sealed it, shall thenceforth be entitled to all the benefits and privileges thereof, and be subject to all the obligations required of the original signers: And the signature or signatures thus added, shall be certified by the said deacons or trustees, with the date thereof.

Section 5. Concerning Youth and Children.

Youth and children, being minors, cannot be received as members of the Church, in its Covenant relation; yet it is agreed that they may be received under the immediate care and government of the Church, at the

desire or consent of such person or persons as have a lawful right to, or control of such minors, together with their own desire or consent; but no minor under the care of the Church, can be employed therein for wages of any kind.

Article III. Of the Trusteeship.

Section 1. Appointment, qualifications & powers of the Trustees.

In the establishment of order in the various branches of the society, it has been found necessary that superintending deacons or agents should be appointed, and authorized to act as Trustees of the temporalities of the Church; Deaconesses are also associated with them to superintend the concerns of the female department. They must be recommended by their honesty & integrity, their fidelity in trust, and their capacity for the transaction of business. Of these qualifications the Ministry and Elders are to be the judges. (These Trustees are generally known among us by the title of Office Deacons, and being appointed by the authority aforesaid, and supported by the general approbation of the Church, they are vested with power to take the

general charge and oversight of all the property, estate and interest, dedicated, devoted, consecrated & given up for the benefit of the Church; to hold, in trust, the fee of all lands belonging to the Church; together with all gifts, grants and donations, which have been, or may hereafter be dedicated, devoted, consecrated and given up, as aforesaid; and the said property, estate, interest, gifts, grants and donations shall constitute the united and consecrated interest of the Church, and shall be held in trust by the said Deacons, as acting Trustees, in their official capacity, and by their successors in said Office and trust forever.

Section 2. Duties of the Trustees.

It is, and shall be the duty of the said Deacons or acting Trustees to improve, use and appropriate the said united interest for the benefit of the church, in all its departments, and for such other religious and charitable purposes as the gospel may require; and also, to make all just and equitable defense in law, for the protection and security of the consecrated and united interest, rights and privileges of the church and Society, jointly and severally, as an associated

community, as far as circumstances and the nature of the case may require. Provided nevertheless, that all the transactions of the said Trustees, in the use, management, protection, defense and disposal of the aforesaid interest, shall be for the benefit and privilege, and in behalf of the Church or of the Society, as aforesaid, and not for any private interest, object or purpose whatever.

Section 3. Trustees to give information & be responsible to Ministry & Elders.

It shall also be the duty of the said Trustees to give information to the Ministry and Elders of the Church, concerning the general state of the temporal concerns of the Church and Society committed to their charge; and also to report to said authority all losses sustained in the united interest thereof, which shall come under their cognizance; and no disposal of any of the real estate of the Church, nor any important contract, involving the association in any manner, shall be made without the previous knowledge and approbation of the authority aforesaid, to whom the said deacons or Trustees are, and shall at all times, be held responsible in all their transactions.

Section 4. Account Books and Books of Record to be kept.

It is, and shall be the duty of the said Trustees or Office Deacons to keep, or cause to be kept, regular books of account, in which shall be entered the debt & credit accounts of all mercantile operations & business transactions between the church and others; all receipts and expenditures; bonds, notes and bills of account, and all other matters pertaining to the united interest of the Church; so that its financial concerns may be readily seen and known whenever called for by the proper authority: And also a Book or Books of Record, in which shall be recorded a true and correct copy of this Covenant; also, all appointments, removals and changes in office of Ministers, Elders, Deacons & Trustees; all admissions, removals, deceases & departure of members; together with all other matters and transactions of a public nature, which are necessary to be recorded for the benefit of the Church, and for the preservation & security of the documents, papers and written instruments pertaining to the united interest and concerns of the Church, committed to their charge. And the said Records shall, at all times, be open to the inspection of the leading authority of the Church, who

shall appoint an auditor or auditors to examine and correct any errors that may, at any time, be found in the accounts, and whose signatures and date of inspection shall be deemed sufficient authority for the correctness and validity of the facts & matters therein recorded.

Section 5. Trustees to Execute a Declaration of Trust.

For the better security of the united and consecrated interest of the Church to the proper uses and purposes stipulated in this Covenant, it shall be the duty of the Trustee or Trustees who may be vested with the lawful title or claim to the real estate of the church, to make and execute a Declaration of Trust, in due form of law, embracing all and singular, the lands, tenements and hereditaments, with every matter of interest pertaining to the Church, which, at the time being, may be vested in him or them, or that may in future come under his or their official charge, during his or their said Trusteeship. The said declaration shall state expressly, that such Trustee or Trustees hold such lands, tenements, ~~and~~ hereditaments and all the personal property of every description belonging to the Church or Society, in trust, for the uses and purposes expressed in, and subject to

the rules, regulations and conditions prescribed by the covenant or constitution of the said church, or any amendments thereto which may hereafter be adopted by the general approbation of the church, and in conformity to the primitive faith & acknowledged principles of the Society: and the said Declaration shall be in writing, duly executed under the hand and seal of such Trustee or Trustees, and shall be recorded in the book of Records provided for in the preceding Section.

Section 6. Vacancies in certain cases how supplied.

We further covenant and agree, that in case it should at any time happen that the office of Trustee should become vacant, by the death or defection of all the Trustees, in whom may be vested the fee of the lands or real estate belonging to said Church or Society, then and in that case, a successor or successors shall be appointed by the constitutional authority recognized in this covenant, according to the rules and regulations prescribed by the same: and the said appointment being duly recorded in the Book of Records provided for in this article, shall be deemed, and is hereby declared to vest in such successor or successors all the right,

interest and authority of his or their predecessors in respect to all such lands, property or estate belonging to the Church or Society aforesaid.

Article IV: Of the Eldership.

Section 1. Choice and appointment of Elders.

The united interests and objects of Believers established in gospel order, require that Elders should be chosen and appointed for the spiritual protection of families, who are to take the lead in their several departments, in the care and government of the concerns of the Church, and of the several families pertaining to the Society. Their number and order should correspond with that of the Ministry. They are required to be persons of good understanding, of approved faithfulness and integrity, and gifted in spiritual administration. They must be selected and appointed by the Ministry, who are to judge of their qualifications.

Section 2. Duties of the Elders.

As faithful watchmen upon the walls of Zion, it becomes the duty of the Elders to watch over their

respective families; to instruct the members in their respective duties; to counsel, encourage, admonish, exhort and reprove, as occasion may require; to lead the worship; to be examples to the members of obedience to the principles and orders of the gospel, and to see that the orders, rules and regulations pertaining to their respective families or departments are properly kept.

Article V. Of family Deacons & Deaconesses.

Section 1. Their qualifications and appointment.

The Office of family Deacons & Deaconesses has long been established in the Church, and is essentially necessary for the care, management and direction of the domestic concerns in each family, order or branch of the church. They are required to be persons of correct and well grounded faith in the established principles of the gospel; honest and faithful in duty; closely united to their Elders, and of sufficient capacity for business. Of these qualifications the Ministry and Elders, by whom they are chosen & appointed, are to be the judges. Their number in each family, is generally two of each sex, but may be more or less, according to the

size of the family, and the extent of their various duties.

Section 2. Their duties and obligations.

The Deacons and Deaconesses of families are intrusted with the care and oversight of the domestic concerns of their respective families. It is their duty to make proper arrangements in business; to maintain good order; to watch over, counsel and direct the members in their various occupations, as occasion may require; to make application to the Office deacons for whatever supplies are needed in the several departments of the family; to maintain union, harmony and good understanding with the said office Deacons & Deaconesses, and to report to their Elders the state of matters which fall under their cognizance and observation. But their power is restricted to the domestic concerns of their respective families or departments, and does not extend to any immediate or direct correspondence or intercourse with those without the bounds of the church. They have no immediate concern with trade and commerce; it is not their business to buy and sell, nor in any way to dispose of the property under their care, except with the union and approbation of the Trustees.

Article VII. Privileges & Obligations of Members.

Section 1. Benefits and privileges of Members in Church Relation.

The united interest of the Church having been formed by the free-will offerings and pious donations of the members respectively, for the objects and purposes already stated, it cannot be considered either as a joint tenancy or a tenancy in common, but a consecrated whole, designed for, and devoted to the uses and purposes of the gospel forever, agreeable to the established principles of the Church: Therefore, it shall be held, possessed and enjoyed by the Church, in their united capacity, as a sacred & covenant right; that is to say, all and every member thereof, while standing in gospel union, and maintaining the principles of this Covenant, shall enjoy equal rights, benefits and privileges, in the use of all things pertaining to the Church, according to their several needs and circumstances; and no difference shall be made on account of what any one has contributed & devoted, or may hereafter contribute and devote to the support and benefit of the Institution.

Section 2. Proviso.

It is nevertheless, provided, stipulated and agreed, that in case any one, having signed this covenant, shall afterwards forfeit his or her claim to membership, by renouncing the principles of the Society, or by wilfully and obstinately violating the rules and regulations thereof, then and in that case, his or her claim to all the aforesaid benefits, privileges and enjoyments, shall be equally forfeited.

Section 3. Obligations of Members.

As subordination and obedience are the life & soul of every well regulated community; so our strength and protection, our happiness and prosperity, in our capacity of church members, must depend on our faithful obedience to the rules and orders of the Church, and to the instruction, counsel and advice of its leaders: Therefore, we do hereby covenant & agree, that we will receive and acknowledge as our Elders in the gospel, those members of the church, who are, or shall be chosen and appointed, for the time being, to that office and calling, by the authority aforesaid; and also, that we will, as faithful

brethren and sisters in Christ, conform and subject to the known and established principles of our community, and to the counsel & directions of the Elders, who shall act in union as aforesaid; and also to all the orders, rules and regulations which now are, or which may be given and established in the church, according to the principles and by the authority aforesaid.

Section 4. Duties of the Members.

The faithful improvement of our time and talents in doing good, is a duty which God requires of mankind as rational and accountable beings, and more especially as members of the church of Christ: therefore it is, and will be required of all and every member of this institution, unitedly and individually, to occupy and improve their time and talents to support and maintain the interest of the same, to promote the objects of this Covenant, and discharge their duty to God and Each other, according to their several abilities and callings, as members in union with one common Head; so that the various gifts & talents of all, may be improved for the mutual benefit of each & all concerned.

Section 5. No special claims in case of Removals.

As we esteem the mutual possession and enjoyment of the consecrated interest and privileges of the church, a consideration fully adequate to any amount of personal interest, labor or service, or any other contribution made, devoted and consecrated by any individual; so we consider that no ground of action can lie, either in law or equity, for the recovery of any property or service devoted or consecrated as aforesaid. And we further agree, that in case of the removal of any member or members from one family, ~~or member~~ society or branch of the church to another, his, her or their previous signature or signatures to the church or family Covenant from whence he, she or they shall have removed, shall forever bar all claims which are incompatible with the true intent and meaning of this Covenant, in the same manner as if such removal had not taken place; yet all who shall so remove in union, and with the approbation of their Elders, shall be entitled to all the benefits and privileges of the family or order in which they shall be placed, so long as they shall conform to the rules & regulations of the same.

Article VIII. Dedications & Release.

Section 1. Dedication of persons, services and property.

According to the faith of the gospel which we have received, and agreeable to the uniform practice of the Church of Christ from its first establishment in this Society, We Covenant and agree to dedicate, devote, consecrate and give up, and by this Covenant we do solemnly and conscientiously, dedicate, devote, consecrate and give up ourselves and our services, together with all our temporal interest, to the service of God and the support and benefit of the church of Christ in this community, and to such other pious and charitable purposes as the gospel may require, to be under the care and direction of the proper constituted authorities of said Church, according to the true intent and meaning of this Covenant, and the established rules and practice of the Church.

Section 2. Declaration and Release of private claim.

Whereas, in pursuance of the requirements of the Gospel, and in the full exercise of our faith, reason and

understanding, we have freely and voluntarily sacrificed all self-interest, and have devoted our persons, services and property, as aforesaid, to the pious & benevolent purposes of the Gospel: Therefore, We do, hereby, solemnly and conscientiously, unitedly and individually, for ourselves, our heirs and assigns, release and quitclaim to the Deacons, or those who, for the time being, are the acting Trustees of the Church, for the uses and purposes aforesaid, all our private personal right, title, interest, claim and demand, of, in and to the estate, interest, property and appurtenances, so consecrated, devoted and given up: And we hereby, jointly and severally, promise and declare, in the presence of God & before witnesses, that we will never hereafter, neither directly nor indirectly, under any circumstances whatever, contrary to the stipulations of this Covenant, make nor require any account of any interest, property, labor or service, nor any division thereof, which is, has been, or may be devoted by us, or any of us, to the uses and purposes aforesaid, nor bring any charge of debt or damage, nor hold any claim nor demand whatever, against the said Deacons or Trustees, nor against the Church or Society, nor against any member thereof, on account of any

property or services given, rendered, devoted or consecrated to the aforesaid sacred and charitable purposes. And we also hereby ratify and confirm every act & deed which we, or any of us, have acted or done agreeable to the true intent and meaning of this Covenant.

In confirmation of all the aforesaid statements, covenants, ~~and~~ promises and articles of agreement, we have hereunto subscribed our names and affixed our or acknowledged seals, on, and after this twenty fourth day of July in the year of our Lord and Savior, One thousand Eight hundred and forty three.

No.		
1	John O Root	Seal
2	James L Prescott.	Seal
3	Elijah Russell	Seal
4	William Andrews	Seal
5	Elisha Russell	Seal
6	Ambrose Bragg	Seal
7	Ebenezer R. Russell	Seal
8	Robert Shillicorn	Seal
9	Samuel Rickert	Seal
10	Daniel Bennett	Seal
11	Lester G. Shepard	Seal
12	Hugh McLucas	Seal

	13	John Barry	Seal
	14	Daniel M. Baird	Seal
	15	Philander G. Crowell	Seal
	16	John Norton	Seal
	17	George W. Royalty	Seal
	18	Benjamin H. Shannon	Seal
82/43/39	19	James M. Mott.	Seal
	20	Daniel L. Kidney	Seal
	21	Samuel F. Miner	Seal
	22	Chester Risley	Seal
	23	George W. Pike	Seal
	24	John Stark	Seal
	25	Christian Stade	Seal
	26	Edward Rupalt	Seal
July 24" 1843.	27	David M. Perry.	Seal
	28		Seal
	29		Seal
	30		Seal
	31		Seal
	32		Seal
	33		Seal
	34		Seal
	35.		Seal

No.			
	1	Susannah Sawyer	Seal
	2	Cornelia C. Torrey	Seal
	3	Phebe her × mark Andrews	Seal
23	4	Polly Sawyer	Seal
14	5	Jerusha Russell 1st	Seal
9	6	Polly Sutton	Seal
	7	Prudence Sawyer	Seal
	8	Hannah Addison	Seal
	9	Caroline Bears	Seal
	10	Mary Edmister	Seal
	11	Rhoda Watson	Seal
	12	Melenda Russell	Seal
	13	Adeline Russell	Seal
	14	Abigail Russell	Seal
	15	Mary A. Russell	Seal
	16	Sally Ann Cooper	Seal
	17	Margaret C. Sawyer	Seal
	18	Caroline Russell	Seal
	19	Melinda O. Torrey	Seal
	20	Lydia Russell	Seal
	21	Harriet Shepard	Seal
	22	Sally Osterhold	Seal
	23	Sabina Daily	Seal

No.	24	Luvolia Sutton	Seal
	25	Eunice Bennett	Seal
	26	Lydia Russell	Seal
	27	Alma Sawyer	Seal
	28	Roxana Russell	Seal
	29	Candace Russell	Seal
	30	Lilly Cooper	Seal
	31	Emelia Young	Seal
	32	Jemusha Russell 2nd	Seal
	33	Mary Baggot	Seal
	34	Harriet Brook	Seal
July 24th 1843.	35	Lovina Sutton	Seal
	36		Seal
	37		Seal
	38		Seal
	39		Seal
	40		Seal
	41		Seal
	42		Seal
	43		Seal

We do hereby certify that on the twenty fourth day of July in the year of our Lord Eighteen hundred and forty three, we were present & witnessed the signing of the foregoing Covenant by the members of the Church at North Union, and each came forward voluntarily and subscribed their names in our presence; beginning at No. 1. John P. Root ... and ending at No. 27 at David W. Perry, and also beginning at No. 28 Jerusha Dudley at No. 35. Lavina Sutton.

Witness our hands:
Stephen Spining,
Daniel Boyd.

North Union July 24th 1843.

We, whose names are subjoined, make these our signatures to the foregoing Covenant or Constitution.

May 23rd 1845.	No. 28	Amasa Blodget	Seal
	29	Hiram Young	Seal
	30	Freeman Phillips	Seal
May 22d 1847.	31	Riley Hovey.	Seal
	32	Oliver G. Wheeler.	Seal
	33	Thomas his X Giles.	Seal
	34	Wm the Terry	Seal
	35	Samuel Thomas	Seal
	36	Wm Taylor	Seal
	37	Joshua his X Jacobs mark	Seal
	38	Joseph Berger.	Seal
	39	[illegible]	Seal
	40	Henry Reichert.	Seal

We whose names are subjoined, make these our signatures to the foregoing Covennant or Constitution

	No.		
May 23.d 1845.	36	Phila Copley.	Seal
	37	Sarah Ann Thayer	Seal
	38	Anna Bennett.	Seal
	39	Lydia — Ann Wells.	Seal
May 22d 1847.	40	Amarilla Thayer late Chogen	Seal
	41	Abigail P. Penfield late Grant	Seal
	42	Susanna Rickert late Grant	Seal
	43	Electa Phillips late Grant	Seal
	44	Mary Ann Countryman.	Seal
	45.	Julia Phillips.	Seal

~~We, Hobbel Pitcher and Sanford Vermilyea members of the Church at Union Village, and Daniel A. Baird and Peter P. Shepard, Deacons of the Church at Smith Town do certify that.~~

The names of the witnesses are on the next page, on account of there not being room on this page together with the Certificate.

North Union May. 23.d 1845.

We, Ashbel Kitchell and Sanford Russell of [illegible] Union Village; and Daniel N. Baird and Lester G. Shepard, Deacons of the Church at North Union, do hereby certify that Almeda Blodget, Freeman Philips, Hiram Philips, Thila Copley, Sarah Ann Kenyon, Anna Bennett, and Lydia Ann Wells, were on this twenty third day of May in the year of our Lord 1845, duly admitted as members of the Church, in joint union, according to the conditions stipulated in Article III. Sec. 4th of the foregoing Covenant, and voluntarily signed their names to the same in our presence.

Ashbel Kitchell,
Sanford Russell,
Daniel N. Baird.
Lester G. Shepard

North Union May 23d 1845.

We Ashbel Kitchell and Enoch Jacobs of Union Village, and Riley Honey and Elisha Russel, Deacons or Trustees of the Church at North Union, do hereby certify that Riley Honey, Oliver Wheeler, Thomas G. Giles, Wm Luey, Samuel Thomas, Charles Taylor, John Jacobs, Joseph Benger, Henry Eslinger, Henry Rickert, Amanilla Chogen, Abigal R. Russell, Susanna Rickert, Electa Philips, Mary Ann Countryman, and Julia Philips, were on this 22d day of May 1847 duly admitted as Members of the Church in joint union, according to the conditions stipulated in Article II Sec. 4th of the foregoing Covenant, and Voluntarily Signed their names to the Same in our presence

Ashbel Kitchell
Enoch Jacobs.—
Riley Honey.
Elisha Russell

North Union May 22d 1847.

We whose names are subjoined, make these our signatures to the foregoing Covenant or Constitution.

	No.		
For witnesses	41	Nelson R Phillips	Seal
to these signa-	42	Luther Bailey	Seal
tures, see page	43	Wm. R. Devan	Seal
43 of this Book.	44	George W. Jefferson	Seal
	45	Marcus H. Bennett.	Seal
March 5th 1861.	46	Thomas Martin	Seal
	47	John Geo. Hoffman	Seal
	48	Thomas his X mark Asbury	Seal

We whose names are subjoined, make these our signatures to the foregoing Covenant or Constitution.

For Witnesses to the above Signature see page 76. of this Book.

No.		
46	Mary Pickert	L.S.
	May 24th. 1847.	
47	Arabella Shepard,	Seal
48	Elizabeth B Peres	Seal
49	Sarah D. Buttolph	Seal
50	Susan Miner	Seal
51	Temperance Doran	Seal
52	Saphia Hoffman	Seal
53	Alias Eve M Lovina Dewey	Seal
54	Sally Wells	Seal
55	Lucinda Countryman	Seal
56	Clymenia Miner	Seal
57	Amanda Gould	Seal
	Alias Manza Gould	Seal

March 5th 1851.

For witnesses to the above signatures, see page 78 of this Book.—

We whose names are subjoined, make these our signatures to the foregoing Covenant or Constitution.

No.	Seal.	No.		Seals
		1	Charles Sweet	Seal
		2	Samuel S. Hunt	Seal
		3	William R. Bennett	Seal
		4	Sanford Rogers	Seal
		5	Jacob Walker	Seal
		6	Christian Lang	Seal
		7	Henry Mahler	Seal
		8	Peter Brown	Seal
		9	George Hunt, 2nd	Seal
		10	Henry Oliver	Seal
		11	William W. Andrews	Seal
		12	Jewel G. Thayer	Seal
		13	Henry C. Burk, 2d	Seal
		14	Oliver his mark Dewey.	Seal

For Witnesses to the above signatures, see page 80 of this Book Jan. 1st 1857.

We whose names are subjoined make these our signatures to the foregoing Covenant or Constitution.

No.	Seal.		Seal.
1		Laura Houghton	Seal
2		Louisa her X mark Hoffman	Seal
3		Babara her X mark Cranz	Seal
4		Lissette her mark Walker	Seal
5		Ruth Button	Seal
6		Caroline Wells	Seal
7		Mary A. Shepard	Seal
8		Polly M. Devan	Seal
9		Harriet Snyder	Seal
10		Elmina Phillips	Seal
11		Lydia Dewey	Seal
12		Ann Rickert.	Seal

For witnesses to the above Signatures, see page 80 of this Book. June 1st 1857.

We whose names are subjoined, make these our signatures to the foregoing Covenant or Constitution.

No.				No.		
1	James	Suite	Seal	1	Lydia Ann Cramer	Seal
2	Wm.	Fitch	Seal	2	Laura M. Tyler	Seal
3	Adolph	Michaels	Seal	3	Sarah Taylor	Seal
4	Samuel	Coger	Seal	4	Hannah Doran	Seal
5	Thomas	Mykes	Seal	5	Ann H. Wallace	Seal
			Seal	6	Sylvia M. Tyler	Seal

For witnesses to the above signatures see page 81 of this Book. January 10th 1863.

We, whose names are subjoined, make these our signatures, to the foregoing Covenant or Constitution.

John Pilot	Seal	Laura Russell	Seal
Paul Jacob	Seal	Maria Pilot	Seal
		Mary Pilot	Seal
		Martha Brunett	Seal

See page 82.

We, whose names are subjoined, make these our signatures, to the foregoing Covenant, or Constitution.

H E Somerfield (Seal)

Lorenz Casselgus (Seal)

~~Ehrenz Deschler~~ Oeschger (Seal)

David S. Watson (Seal)

August Schmidt (Seal)

Frederic Heaton (Seal)

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We Ashbel Ritchell and Enoch Jacobs of Union Village, and Riley Honey and Elisha Russell, Deacons, or Trustees of the Church at North Union, do hereby certify that Mary Rickert, was, on this 24th day of May 1847, duly admitted as a Member of the Church in joint Union, according to the conditions stipulated in Article III. Sec. 4th, of the foregoing Covenant, and voluntarily signed her name to the same in our presence.

Ashbel Ritchell.
Enoch Jacobs.
Riley Honey.
Elisha Russell.

North Union May 24th 1847.

1851
43
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We, Richard W. Pelham of Water Vliet, Ohio, and Jeremiah Ingalls of North Union Ohio and Riley Honey, and James S. Prescott Trustees of the Church at North Union, do hereby certify that ~~Williams Dewey, Charles Thorn,~~ Nelson Philips, Luther Bailey, George Jefferson, William R. Devan, Marcus H. Bennett, Thomas Martin John George Hoffman, Thomas Osbury, Arabella Shepard, Elizabeth Devee, Sarah D. Buttolph, Susan Miner, Temperance Devan, Sophia Hoffman alias Evens, Lovina Dewey, Sally Wells, Lucinda Countryman, Clymenia Miner, Amanda Gould alias Mongo, were on this 5th day of March, 1851. duly admitted as members of the church in joint union according to the conditions stipulated in Article II. Sec. 1st of the foregoing Covenant or Constitution, and voluntarily signed their names to the same in our presence.

R. W. Pelham
Jeramiah Ingalls,
Riley Honey
James S. Prescott.

North Union March 5th 1851.

We Riley Honey and James S. Prescott legal Trustees of the Church at North Union, & Sanford Russell acting Trustee do hereby certify, that Thos Sweet, Samuel S. Hurlburt, William R. Bennett, Sanford Russell, Jacob Walker, Christian Lantz, Henry Mohler, Peter Brown George Hunt, Henry Oliver, William W. Andrews, Levi S. Thayer, Henry L. Bush, Oliver Dewey, Laura Houghton, Loisa Hoffman, Barbaa Crandall, Lesetta Walker, Ruth Button, Caroline Wells, Mary L. Sheperd, Polly M. Devan, Harriet Snyder, Elmina Phillips Lydia Dewey & Ann Rickert, were on this 1st day of January, 1857, duly admitted as members of the Church in joint union, according to the conditions stipulated in Article II. Sec. 4th of the foregoing Covenant, and voluntarily signed their names to the same in our presence.

Trustees. { Riley Honey
James S. Prescott,
Sanford Russell

We Richard W. Pelham and Freeman Phillips of North Union, Ohio, certify that James Foote, William Fitch, Adolph Richards, Samuel Rogers Thomas Milbra, Lydia Ann Cramer, Laura M. Tyler Sarah Taylor, Hannah Dean, Ann M. Wallace, Sylvia M. Tyler, were on this 10th day of January 1863, duly admitted as members of the Church in Joint union, according to the conditions stipulated in Art. II Sec 4th of the foregoing covenant & Constitution & voluntarily signed their names to the same in our presence.

R. W. Pelham.
Freeman Phillips
James S. Prescott.

North Union January 10th 1863.

We, Riley Y Coney, and Jas. L. Prescott, Legal Trustees of the Church at North Union do hereby Certify that John Pilot, Paul Jacoby Laura Russell, Mariah Pilot, Mary Pilot, and Martha Brunnett, were on this 23rd day of October 1867. admitted as members of the church in joint union, according to the conditions stipulated in Article II. Sec 4th. of the foregoing Covenant, and voluntarily signed their names to the same in our presence.

Trustees. } Riley Y Coney
James L. Prescott.

North Union Oct. 23rd 1867.

We, Riley Haney and James S. Prescott
Legal Trustees of the church at North Union,
do hereby certify that H. E. Somerfield
Lorenz Oeschger, and David S. Watson,
were on this first day of October 1871,
admitted as members of the church in
joint union, according to the conditions
stipulated in Article II. Sec. 4 th, of
the foregoing Covenant, and voluntarily
signed their names in our presence.

Legal Trustees. { Riley Haney
Jas. S. Prescott,

North Union, Oct. 1st 1871.

We Riley Y Coney and Jas. L. Prescott Legal Trustees of the Church at North Union do hereby Certify that ~~I~~ August. Smith, ~~was~~ on this 15th day of October 1871, admitted as a member of the Church in joint union, according to the conditions stipulated in Article II. Sec 4th, of the foregoing Covenant, and voluntarily signed his name in our presence.

Riley Y Coney

Jas. L. Prescott.

North Union Oct. 16th. 1871.

We, Riley Honey and Jas. S. Prescott, legal Trustees, of the Church at North Union, do hereby Certify, that Frederick Heaton, was on this 20th. day of November, 1871, admitted as a member of the Church, in joint union according to the conditions stipulated in Article II.. Secs 4 th. of the foregoing Covenant, and voluntarily signed his name in our presence.

Riley Honey,
James S. Prescott.

North Union Nov. 20th 1871